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ABSTRACT

This study uses the most recent data from the Current Population Survey to examine socioeconomic standing (mainly educational attainment and labor force participation) of Southeast Asian (SEA) immigrants. The study focuses on what progress SEA immigrants and refugees have made after 2 decades of resettlement, whether second generation children fare worse than their immigrant parents, what factors are attributed to these groups' respective socioeconomic standings, and how parents' educational levels and employment status affect their offsprings' educational attainment and employment status. Results indicate that immigrant generation does affect educational attainment. The second generation of SEA immigrants is doing not only as well as the 1.5 generation, but also better than the immigrant generation. The effect of immigrant generation on the likelihood of being employed is not statistically significant. However, the duration of U.S. residence and the individual and family characteristics have strong effects on immigrants' employment status. Social capital in the family remains an important factor in predicting academic outcomes among SEA immigrants. School enrollment and years of schooling are strong predictors of labor force participation for immigrant offspring. (Contains 81 references.) (SM)

Educational Attainment and Labor Force Participation of U.S. Immigrant Offspring From Southeast Asia

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Introduction

Constituting a sizable segment of the post-1965 U.S. immigrant population, Southeast Asian (SEA) immigrants and refugees represent one of the most economically disadvantaged groups arriving in the United States. Concerns have been raised not only about their adaptation success, but also their consequent influence on their offspring's socioeconomic progress in the United States (Waters and Eschbach 1995).

Studies of the socioeconomic adaptation of recent immigrants and their offspring are based on two competing theories: classical and segmented assimilation. The former predicts that assimilation, defined as a process by which a person becomes part of a mainstream society by becoming culturally, socially, and economically indistinguishable from the majority and gains full acceptance into that society, represents the only pathway for upward social mobility of immigrants and their children. The latter rejects such a necessity of assimilation and offers multiple paths of assimilation, including de-assimilation and downward assimilation. De-assimilation, as an alternative pathway for social mobility, refers to the process of strengthening ethnic solidarity and utilizing ethnic community resources, such as kinship and co-ethnic ties, ethnic support, and ethnic entrepreneurship, as a means for social mobility without relying on the resources of the larger society. Without ethnic community resources, recent immigrants and their second-generation offspring who have lower levels of human capital are likely to be downwardly mobile (assimilating into a minority, inner-city culture that is oppositional to that of the white majority).

However, disagreement persists over intergenerational disparity in the process of adaptation. Some refugees studies have shown that native-born Asians are better

assimilated socioeconomically than their ethnic immigrant counterparts (Gordon 1987a, 1987b; Lobo 1993; Rumbaut 1987; Whitmore, Trautmann, and Caplan 1989; Yang 2000). Other studies even provide optimistic conclusions about the economic success of SEA immigrants' second generation (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore 1991; Caplan, Whitmore, and Choy 1989). In contrast, the proponents of segmented assimilation theory see little evidence that SEA immigrants' children are doing socioeconomically better than their immigrant parents without relying on ethnic community resources (Portes 1995a, 1995b; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Evidence supporting this argument is primarily based on case studies that have focused exclusively on certain racial and ethnic groups, mainly Cuban, Mexican, and Vietnamese (Borjas 1995a; Fix and Passel 1994; Portes and Bach 1985; Zhou and Bankston 1998).

Problem Statements and Research Questions

Although these studies provide some understanding about recent immigrants' adaptation into American society, they have several shortcomings. First, by emphasizing the roles of ethnic community resources in adaptation, these studies are not relevant for understanding the experiences of a significant portion of immigrants who find themselves outside their ethnic communities and are still able to assimilate successfully into American society. If these immigrants are likely to be more affluent than those living in ethnic communities, the theory is apparently unable to predict the adaptation outcomes of higher-class minorities (Neckerman and Carter 1999). Second, these studies are based on geographically specific data, such as those collected by Portes, Zhou, and their associates on Cubans in Miami, Mexicans in Southern California, and Vietnamese in Versailles Village, New Orleans. Generalizations from these case studies are still limited by this

geographical specificity, as pointed out by Waldinger and Perlmann (1997). Finally, previous studies have treated refugees as a homogeneous group (e.g., Schoeni 1998). Although refugees share common reasons for leaving their home countries and are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, they nevertheless are of different cultures. For instance, Vietnamese are mainly of Tao or Roman Catholic religions while Cambodians, Thais, and Laotians are primarily of the Buddhist faith. Additionally, Sino-Vietnamese immigrants (a Chinese ethnic group in Vietnam), as well as Cambodian-Chinese, are more predisposed to self-employment and middleman occupations than are Vietnamese and Cambodians (Desbarats 1986; Gold 1992; Johnson 2000). Strategies for adaptation are also known to be different among these groups (Johnson 1998), with Vietnamese and Hmong being more likely to share household resources than the other ethnic groups (Kibria 1994). These cultural differences can shape the adaptation process and, therefore, ethnic group differences in adaptation are expected (Strand 1989).

To understand better the current and future socioeconomic standings of SEA immigrants and their native-born children, research should rely on nationally representative data and address the above shortcomings. The study utilizes the most recent data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) to examine the socioeconomic standing (mainly, educational attainment and labor force participation) of this group. Using such national representative data can reduce problems associated with selection bias mentioned above. Examining the generational disparity in adaptation outcomes among SEA immigrants, the study focuses on the following research questions. What progress have SEA immigrants and refugees made after two decades of resettlement? Do the second-generation children fare worse than do their immigrant parents? What factors

are attributed to these groups' respective socioeconomic standings? How do parents' educational levels and employment status affect their offspring's educational attainment and employment status?

Literature Review

Straight-line assimilation theorists argue that the outcomes of assimilation are desirable and more complete for earlier immigration cohorts and for higher generations than for recent cohorts. In his cycle of race relations, Park (1950) envisions four progressive and irreversible stages of assimilation based on social interaction between the majority and the minority groups: social contact, competition and conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. As an interaction among persons or groups, social contact is the initial stage of social relations brought about by migration and ultimately leads to assimilation (Park and Burgess 1969).

Gordon (1964) proposes an ideal type of assimilation, which consists of seven sub-processes: acculturation, structural assimilation, amalgamation, identificational assimilation, attitude-receptional assimilation, behavior-receptional assimilation, and civic assimilation. A central issue in Gordon's assimilation theory is the sub-process of acculturation, a process leading to "change of cultural patterns to those of host society" (Gordon 1964:71). Gordon identifies the cultural patterns of white middle-class Protestant Americans as the core culture into which immigrants assimilate. Acculturation is assumed to begin once a minority group is exposed to the mainstream culture and its occurrence is independent of any other sub-processes of assimilation. Additionally, acculturation is a necessary condition for occurrence of the other sub-processes of

assimilation. Even so, fulfillment of this stage does not guarantee assimilation. As Gordon (1964:77) pointed out, this "condition of acculturation only may continue indefinitely." Examining American society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gordon believed that acculturation had been achieved as earlier European immigrants (especially those from Northern Europe and Jews from Eastern Europe) and their children acquired the dominant group's language, religion, and culture.

Common explanations are associated with length of U.S. residence and socialization of the native-born children. Over time, immigrants will learn the host dominant culture and accumulate enough human capital to succeed in the host society. Having been socialized (including receiving an education and adapting to cultural behavior) in the host society, the immigrant children are expected to take on the cultural values of the mainstream and, thus, to fare better socially and economically than do their immigrant parents.

However, the proponents of the segmented assimilation theory provide a more pessimistic prediction of the success of immigrant children (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou, 1998; Zhou and Bankston 1998). According to this view, downward assimilation (or the second-generation decline), as well as de-assimilation, is very likely because of three societal factors: modes of reception, characteristics of immigrant ethnic communities, and conditions of the host labor market. With regard to the second generation, the theory predicts that recent immigrants' children are less likely to do well in American society than their immigrant parents for several reasons. First, the labor market quality of recent immigrants is relatively lower than that of earlier immigrants (Borjas 1985, 1995a, 1995b, 1999). SEA immigrant parents are from lower social backgrounds and have lower

levels of education and fewer transferable skills necessary for smooth upward mobility. Thus, they are struggling for survival in the host society and lack material support and quality time for their children's success. Second, they are more likely to reside in inner cities, characterized by inadequate resources, poverty, poor quality of schools, and inner-city cultural norms and behaviors that are opposed to those of the mainstream. The conflict between parental expectations and inner-city cultural influence is expected to lessen parental control, and thus lead to children's mal-adaptation (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

The second-generation decline hypothesis of Gans (1992) provides a more pessimistic view of immigrant adaptation. It predicts that the second generation of post-1965 immigrants is less likely to succeed in the American economy because parents lack adequate material support and immigrant children are less likely to take jobs traditionally accepted by immigrants. Consequently, children would end up in the "American poor or underclass." One limitation of Gans's hypothesis is the failure to take into account for factors, such as ethnic ties, that might prevent downward mobility of the children.

Correlates of Educational Attainment

Immigrants and refugees from SEA countries have reportedly lower educational attainment than do any other immigrant groups (Clark 1998; Hein 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Waters and Eschbach 1995). Even so, existing findings show high academic performance of immigrant children, regardless of the quality of their schools, family size, household income, and other controlled factors (Blair and Qian 1998; Ima and Rumbaut 1989; Rumbaut 1987; Whitmore et al. 1989).

Educational attainment varies by age at arrival and generational status of immigrants. For instance, age at arrival has a strong impact on immigrants' English-language proficiency, with immigrants who came as children having the greatest proficiency for at least two reasons. Older immigrants have greater difficulty in learning a new language than do those of younger ages (Friedberg 1991) because they have had longer exposure to their home countries' language and culture than do those who immigrate as children (McManus, Gould, and Welch 1983). In addition to their language ability, the second-generation youth of immigrants are expected to achieve higher educational achievement than foreign-born youth because immigrant parents tend to promote their academic achievement (Kao and Tienda 1995). For example, findings based on the November 1989 CPS data showed that age at arrival had a monotonic effect on language proficiency, with those who immigrated before age 15 having the greatest odds of language proficiency (Espenshade and Fu 1997). Rong and Grant (1992) also found that the immigrant generation had the lowest grade completed and the patterns of educational attainment varied by ethnicity. Among Hispanics, successive generations tend to have higher educational attainment. For Asians, the highest degree completed was not statistically different between immigrant and native-born children. These authors argued that the non-significant gain in the educational attainment of the second generation of Asian immigrants is due to the near maximum achievement of the immigrants' children, beyond which further progress is less likely. However, this study failed to examine further variations in educational performance among Southeast Asian ethnic groups.

From the segmented assimilation point of view, ethnic resources in the form of human capital within the community play a substantial role in explain socioeconomic adaptation outcomes of immigrants' offspring. Social capital within the community refers to the ability of immigrants to appeal to co-ethnics for enforcing their normative expectations and supervision of their children. It exists in a community where ethnic solidarity is strong, characterized by the interconnectedness between the family and the community (Zhou and Bankston 1998). Social capital in the form of "strong and stable social relations within communities can facilitate the formation and growth of social capital in single-parent families as well as two-parent families." Such capital provides an "essential adaptive mechanism for survival and a means of maintaining consistent standards, establishing role models, and ensuring parental authority and effective social control over children" (Zhou and Bankston 1998:54-55). Involving in ethnic community activities increases the school performance of Vietnamese youth from poor families and prevents them from downward assimilation. Thus, even though families are poor and live in low-income neighborhoods, their children are able to improve their schooling outcomes if the social relations in communities are conducive to upward mobility.

However, the proponents of segmented assimilation theory pay little attention to social capital within the family. Prior research has consistently shown that children living in biological two-parent families have better schooling outcomes than do their counterparts who live in one-parent families. Two parents provide more quality time for children with regard to parental involvement, supervision, and support than do one-parent families (Astone and McLanahan 1991; Lam 1997; Rumbaut 1994, 1996; Slaughter-Defoe et al. 1990). Furthermore, the proponents of segmented assimilation theory tend to

disregard the negative effect of ethnic communities on English-language acquisition and educational attainment. Existing findings consistently show that the immediate ethnic environment impedes the progress of language ability and, thus, academic achievement. Spatial concentration of immigrants and residential segregation of non-English speaking immigrants foster the use of immigrants' native language and reduces English proficiency by reducing the opportunity cost of remaining monolingual and the opportunities and incentives to learn English (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990; Stevens 1992; Veltman 1983, 1988). Even immigrants' household size appears to have a negative impact on language proficiency because immigrants from a larger household have better chances of using and maintaining their native language in daily life than do their counterparts from smaller households (Espenshade and Fu 1997). According to Kuwahara (1998), Cambodian, Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese, and Mexican youths who are bound closely in the social orders of their communities actively differentiate themselves from the mainstream and have lower success in schooling than their counterparts.

Parents' education represents another factor of educational attainment for children. Using 1996 General Social Survey data for Canadian-born persons age 25 and above, Nakhaie and Curtis (1998) found that paternal and maternal education continues to have strong, positive relationships with children's educational attainment, controlling for parents' social class. While the question of whether the education of fathers or mothers has stronger impact on children's education remains (e.g., Boyd 1982; Cuneo and Curtis 1975; Nakhaie and Curtis 1998; Parcel and Dufur 2001; Teachman and Paasch 1996; Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1997), the education of fathers should be more

important for SEA immigrants' offspring because of their home culture (more incentive for males' schooling and males as breadwinners).

The above review shows that Asian immigrants' children have performed quite well in school. Their academic performance is likely to be affected by decades of U.S. residence, parents' education, family structure, and age at arrival. The positive effect of decades of U.S. residence supports the straight-line assimilation hypothesis. Furthermore, the positive relationship between children's schooling outcomes and their parents' educational levels suggests an intergenerational transmission of parental values. Everything else being equal, educated parents can assist their children in their schooling, especially those who may face language communication problems at school. Central-city residence has a detrimental impact on the schooling of immigrant children because living in an impoverished neighborhood and having close contact with an inner-city culture would depreciate the educational value and the process of educational attainment.

Correlates of Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation in a host labor market has been an important indicator of the socioeconomic standing of immigrants. The classical assimilation model predicts that the labor force participation of low-skilled immigrants and refugees is lower upon their arrival than that of native-born whites of native parentage. However, their labor force participation rate increases over time as they improve their skills, overcome their English-language difficulty, and become familiar with the structural opportunities of the U.S. economy.

Chiswick and Cohen's (1997) study of employment status for foreign-born persons using data from four Current Population Surveys (November 1979, April 1983,

June 1986, and June 1988) confirmed this prediction. These scholars found that non-natives reached labor force participation parity with natives during their first decade of U.S. residence, after controlling for immigrant ethnic group, education, work experience, year of survey, and unemployment rate at the time of their arrival. Additionally, the effect of the unemployment rate at arrival had no adverse long-term impact on the labor force participation of immigrants. Consistent findings are also found in cross-sectional studies based on the decennial census data (Chiswick 1982; Chiswick and Hurst 1996), in an Indochinese refugee study in San Diego, California (Strand 1989), and in Meisenheimer's (1992) comparative study of the labor force participation between U.S. natives and immigrants.

For example, using the November 1989 CPS data, Meisenheimer (1992) found that recent immigrant cohorts had much lower rates of labor force participation than did earlier cohorts, especially for those aged 25-54. However, the rates for both immigrant males and females aged 16 and above who arrived before 1975 approached those of U.S. natives. With regard to immigrants' unemployment rates, the pattern is the opposite. Recent immigrants tend to have higher unemployment rates than do the earlier cohorts. According to Meisenheimer (1992), the higher unemployment rates of recent immigrants are attributable to their younger age, lower English-language skills, and recency of U.S. residence.

Another set of important factors affecting labor force participation is formal education and English-language fluency, which both are expected to have positive effects on employment status regardless of nativity, statistical procedure, and relevant control factors (Chiswick and Cohen 1997; Meisenheimer 1992). Based on 1970, 1980, and 1990

decennial data, the number of completed years of schooling is a potential factor in explaining foreign-born women's employment (Schoeni 1998). However, some studies have shown that the effect of English language fluency appears to be a short-term positive effect that tends to decrease with length of residence. In studies of refugees' economic self-sufficiency and immigrants' labor force participation, English-speaking ability matters during the first few years of resettlement, after which the effect attenuates (Meisenheimer 1992; Portes and Schauffler 1996; Smith and Edmonston 1997; Stevens 1994; Strand 1989; Whitmore et al. 1989). The decreased effect of English language fluency on the labor force participation is due to the strong correlation between the length of U.S. residence and English ability. Thus, the effect of English-language ability is partially explained by length of residence, although this trend may not be the same for recent cohorts of refugees who are likely to have fewer skills and lower educational attainment than the earlier cohorts (Strand 1989).

Family resources represent another set of factors for labor force participation, especially labor force participation by immigrants' children. Keithly and Deseran (1995) argued that the likelihood of being employed in the labor market for adolescents is affected not only by individual characteristics, but also by family resources, such as family structure, family income, and parental employment status. These authors found that adolescents from families headed by two parents or with higher socioeconomic status were more likely to be in the labor force than those from female-headed families or families with low socioeconomic status, controlling for individual and local labor market characteristics. These adolescents tended to have access to a variety of employment opportunities through their family affiliations.

Summary

From the classical assimilation point of view, the adaptation outcomes of immigrants increase with successive immigrant generations and length of U.S. residence. However, the segmented assimilation theory and the second-generation decline hypothesis predict that the second generation of low-skilled immigrants is less likely to be well because immigrant parents lack adequate resources and the immigrants' children are not ready to take the same low-paid jobs as their immigrant parents. While both the classical and segmented assimilation theories admit the role of human capital accumulation over time, the proponents of the segmented assimilation theory give priority to societal factors and ignore the negative effects of social closure in ethnic communities. Furthermore, data for particular ethnic groups in specific locations may confound the conclusions and generalizations of the future of immigrant children. Examples are Zhou and Bankston's (1998) study of Vietnamese children in "a rapidly deteriorating working-class suburb" in Versailles Village, in which Roman Catholic community predominates and Portes's (1995b) study of immigrants' second generation in San Diego, California (where Mexicans and the Vietnamese are highly concentrated), and in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida (where Cuban and Haitian Americans are overwhelmingly concentrated). Downward social mobility might mean that immigrants are in the conflict and accommodation stages of Park's assimilation and time may not yet be sufficient for them to make their way to the end of the assimilation process.

Given these concerns, the current study attempts to examine the generational differences in educational attainment and labor force participation of SEA immigrants by incorporating four sets of the predictors (immigrant generation, individual and family

factors, and the characteristics of residential location) using nationally representative data. It is argued that the adaptation outcomes of SEA immigrants and their offspring depend largely on their ability to adapt in the host society and family resources. Younger age at arrival and the native-born children entail greater exposure to the host environment, the ability to adapt, and a better chance for success. Thus, the second generation is expected to have higher adaptation outcomes than its parental generation (Hypothesis 1). Alternatively, immigrant children may not exhibit progress over that of their immigrant parents due to their recency in the United States. If the duration of U.S. residence does matter in assimilation, time may not yet be enough to observe their relatively high socioeconomic standings. Additionally, their success would increase if they come from families with higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Family background is crucial for this immigrant group because of their tradition of strong kinship and mutual support. Therefore, immigrant offspring from families with higher socioeconomic backgrounds have higher educational attainment and are more likely to be employed than do their counterparts from lower socioeconomic background families (Hypothesis 2).

Data, Methods, and Measurement

This study analyzes pooled data from March 1994-2001 Current Population Surveys (CPS) (U.S. Department of Commerce 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000a, and 2001). The CPS is a monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau since 1948. The basic CPS collects demographic and labor force data on the civilian non-institutional population aged 15 years old and above and the data on foreign-born population (such as country of birth, birthplace of parents, years of entry into the United

States, and citizenship). The March supplement collects additional data on educational attainment, income, poverty, health insurance, non-cash public assistance benefits, geographical mobility, and household and family characteristics.

The CPS sample is a probability and multistage stratified sample drawn from the prior census design sample. The sample consists of about 57,000 housing units from 729 sample areas for the 1994 CPS, 54,500 housing units from 792 sample areas for the 1995 CPS, and 47,000 housing units from 792 sample areas for the 1996-2001 CPS. The housing units are selected for inclusion in each monthly survey based on a 4-8-4 sampling scheme. This scheme means that each housing unit is interviewed for four consecutive months and then dropped out of the sample for the next 8 months and is brought back in the following four months. The housing units are rotated from month to month in such a way that one new group is included in the sample for the first time and another group returns after being excluded for 8 months. On a yearly basis, the CPS sample should ideally have 50 percent of units included in the same month survey from the previous year.

Given this sampling design, overlapping cases should be excluded in cross-sectional studies. Ideally, the matching keys should not change over time (the household identification number (H-IDNUM), the household number (H-HHNUM), and the person line number in the household (A-LINENO)). However, the U.S. Census Bureau recommends that additional key variables be used depending on the need of the study. Merging the longitudinal CPS data is complicated by recording errors, non-response, mortality, and migration that occur between surveys and the combination of H-IDNUM and A-LINENO may be assigned to a different CPS respondent if the original respondent

moves away from a sampled housing unit and a new respondent moves into the unit (Madrian and Lefgren 1999). Thus, any attempt to merge the CPS data based solely on these identifiers may provide matches that do not represent the same individuals and leave out individuals that do not match even if they are the same respondents in both matched CPS surveys. Given the above, the study used five identifiers to identify the year-to-year overlapping cases: H-IDNUM, H-HHNUM, A-LINENO, sex, and age. After merged by H-IDNUM, H-HHNUM, and A-LINENO, the matched cases were verified for their correct match status by sex and age. The identified overlapping cases are excluded from the data.

Then, two analytical data sets were generated (pooled and immigrant offspring) and both were restricted to respondents ages 16 and above. The pooled data include all immigrants from the five mainland SEA countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) and native-born Americans who have at least one parent born in one of the above countries. To avoid unobserved effects from family variables, the offspring data were extracted from the pooled data to include only respondents who reported to be the offspring of the CPS household heads. The selected SEA immigrants' offspring can be biological or non-biological sons and daughters of CPS respondents and either native-born or immigrants. Thus, the data for SEA immigrants' offspring are not restricted to only their second generation. Then, parents' education and employment status were merged to the offspring data. The data were weighted using an adjusted weight. The pooled data yield 3,219 cases, among which 766 represent sons and daughters of SEA immigrants.

Educational Attainment Model

Educational attainment was originally measured as an ordinal variable based on the highest level completed. This ordinal variable was recoded into a continuous variable by assigning years of schooling completed to each level of education. Then, the educational attainment was modeled by means of a Weighted Least Squares regression (WLS) to adjust for inconstant variance of the error terms for all observations. A generalized form of WLS regression model of years of schooling completed can be written as:

$$w_i^{1/2}Y_i = w_i^{1/2}(\beta_0 + \beta_1X_{i1} + \beta_2X_{i2} + \beta_3X_{i3} + \beta_4X_{i4} + \varepsilon_i)$$

Here, β_0 is the regression constant; β_1 through β_4 are partial regression coefficients associated with four sets of predictors X_1 through X_4 (immigrant generation and duration of U.S. residence, individual characteristics, family characteristics, and the control variables); ε_i is the error term associated with the i^{th} observation; and $w_i^{1/2}$ is the given weight of the i^{th} observation. The weight is the reciprocal of the observation's error term variance and is defined as $w_i = 1/\sigma_i^2$.

Employment Status Model

Employment status is measured by a dummy variable with 1 indicating being employed and 0 being unemployed or not in the labor force (NIL). Logistic regression is appropriate for this binary dependent variable because it allows us to predict the probability of being employed for an individual i^{th} as opposed to being unemployed or NIL. Suppose that p_i is the probability of being employed for an individual i^{th} . The logistic model of employment status can be written as:

k

$$\log [(p_i / (1-p_i))] = \sum_{k=0} \beta_k X_{ik},$$

Here, $\log [(p_i / (1-p_i))]$ = natural logarithm of the odds of being employed; β_k = estimate associated with predictor X_k , expressed in a logit form; and X_k = four sets of predictors ($k = 0, 1, \dots, 4$) described above.

Measurements

In studying intergenerational differences in educational attainment, research has documented the implications of using different definitions for the second generation. According to Oropesa and Landale (1997), researchers should not arbitrarily combine immigrants' foreign-born children with native-born children. Using decimal points to distinguish native-born from foreign-born children, such as 1.75, 1.5, and 1.25 generations for those who arrive at age 0-5, 6-12, and 13-17, respectively, is suggested because it reflects their different ability of schooling upon arrival (Espenshade and Fu 1997; Hirschman 1994; Oropesa and Landale 1997).

Immigrant generation is represented by two dummy variables (coded 1 for the 1.0 and 1.5 generations), with the second generation (coded 0) being the reference. The 1.0 generation refers to immigrants who arrived at age 18 and above and the 1.5 generation refers to immigrant children who arrived at age between 6 and 17. The second generation is defined to include both immigrants who arrived at age below 6 and the native-born children. Length of the duration of U.S. residence is measured as the difference between year of arrival and year of survey. Since year of arrival was collapsed in the CPS data, the duration of U.S. residence is represented by two dummy variables, a duration less than 9-10 years and a duration more than 10-11 years. The native-born children is the reference.

Four variables are used to represent individual characteristics in this study: gender, age, marital status, and school enrollment. Gender is coded 1 for male and 0 for female. Age is measured in years. Since the effect of age is nonlinear, the squared term of age is introduced in the model. Marital status is coded 1 for married and 0 otherwise. Enrolled in school is coded 1 if a respondent was enrolled in school in the year preceding the survey and 0 otherwise.

Family characteristics are represented by presence of children under 6 in the family, living arrangement, and total family income. Presence of children is coded 1 if respondents lived in a family with children under 6 and 0 otherwise. Living arrangement is created using the information of family relations and the family identification number. It consists of three categories: two-parent family (reference), one-parent family (dummy 1), and non-family or secondary individuals (dummy 2). The last category includes those who lived in the same households but had no family relations with the household head. Since sharing a household is common among SEA immigrants, this category deserves a separation. Family income is a continuous variable, measured in thousands and adjusted for 1999 dollars. This variable represents an amount of combined income of all individuals in the family.

Two variables representing parent's educational level and parent's labor force participation are used for the analysis of immigrant offspring's education and employment status. Parent's education is measured as father's years of schooling completed (as described earlier) unless the respondent has no father, then the father measure is replaced by mother's years of schooling completed. Parent's labor force

participation is represented by two dummy variables: both parents are employed and one parent is employed. Respondents with no parent employed serve as the reference group.

Variables representing the characteristics of residential location and country origin are control variables. As aforementioned, the characteristics of the ethnic residential community (such as ethnic concentration and ethnic networks) influence the outcomes of immigrant adaptation. However, the CPS data do not provide information about the characteristics of immigrants' communities or residential neighborhoods, except those of the U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Given this limitation, the characteristics of MSAs are represented by living in the central city of an MSA (coded 1 for the respondents who lived in the central city of an MSA and 0 for those living outside it) and the proportion of each SEA ethnic population in an MSA. While the former represents the place of residence for lower social class respondents and is used as a proxy of exposure to inner-city culture, the latter can be a proxy of ethnic concentration and ethnic contacts. The higher the percent of an ethnic population to the total population in an area, the greater is the chance for individuals from that ethnic group to get in touch with their co-ethnics. the proportion of each SEA ethnic population in an MSA is computed as $P_{ix} = (n_{ix} / N_x) * 100$; where n_{ix} is the number of the population of an ethnic group i living in an area x and N_x is the total population in the area x .

In addition, the US major geographical region of residence is also included: the Northeast, Midwest, and South (coded 1) and the West (the reference). Ethnicity is represented by three dummy variables: Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam (coded 1) and Laos and Myanmar are combined and left out for the reference group.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 summarizes descriptive statistics from the pooled and offspring data.

Slightly less than 60 percent of the sample were immigrants arriving at age 18 and above. The 1.5 generation, immigrants who arrived at age between 6 and 17, accounted for 25 percent, while the second generation accounted only 16 percent. Furthermore, 34 percent were recent immigrants who had lived in the US less than 9-10 years. The native-born children of SEA immigrants accounted for only 12.5 percent of the pooled sample.

The gender composition of mainland SEA immigrants indicates that female immigrants outnumbered male immigrants by about 3 percent (51.5 percent versus 48.5 percent, respectively). The data also showed that 53.0 percent of the total sample was married and the median age was 34 years old. Sixteen percent of immigrants were still enrolled in school.

With regard to living arrangement, a significant number of SEA immigrants lived in shared household (19.4 percent reported to be unrelated secondary individuals), while 63 percent reported to live in two-parent families and 17.6 percent lived in one-parent families. Furthermore, 23.7 percent of all immigrants had at least one child below 6 years old in the family. The median family income was 32.6 thousand in 1999 dollars.

SEA immigrants were likely to live in central cities and in the West. For instance, about 46.4 percent of all SEA immigrants and their offspring lived in central cities of MSAs and 51.3 percent resided in the Western states, while 24.8 percent lived in the South. The Northeast and Midwest states had the equally lowest shares of SEA immigrants and their native-born children (about 12 percent each).

Compared with the pooled data, the offspring data show some differences in the distribution of selected characteristics. The second generation accounted for about one-third. About 42.4 percent of immigrant offspring had the duration of U.S. residence 10 years or more and 38 percent had less than 10-11 years of residence. Furthermore, immigrant offspring males outnumbered their female counterparts and were likely to be young (the median age was 22.8), unmarried (only 3.3 percent were married), and still enrolled in school (46.7 percent). The data showed a high proportion of living in one-parent families (40.5 percent).

In addition, a substantial portion of SEA immigrant offspring was from families with low family resources. Forty-two percent had a parent without high school diploma and 31 percent had a parent completed high school. Only 27 percent of immigrant offspring had a parent who had some college education. Furthermore, only 25.1 percent of immigrant offspring had both parents employed, while 31.4 percent had none of their parents employed. The characteristics of place of residence of immigrant offspring did not substantially differ from those of the immigrants from the pooled data.

Bivariate Findings

Figures 1 and 2 present the average years of schooling immigrant generation and the duration of U.S. residence for the pooled and immigrant offspring data, respectively. The results in Figure 1 indicate that the educational attainment of SEA immigrants' second generation was higher than that of the immigrant generation (12.1 years versus 10.6 years, respectively), but slightly lower than that of the 1.5 generation (12.4 years).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Pooled	Immigrant Offspring
Number	3,220	767
Percent	100.0	100.0
<u>Immigration Factors</u>		
Immigrant Generation		
1.0 generation	59.2	34.1
1.5 Generation	24.6	34.7
Second generation	16.2	31.2
Duration of U.S. Residence		
10 Years or More	53.7	42.4
Less Than 10 Years	33.8	37.9
Native Born	12.5	19.7
<u>Individual Characteristics</u>		
Females (%)	51.5	45.8
Married (%)	53.0	3.3
Age (Median)	34.0	22.8
School Enrollment (%)	15.8	46.7
<u>Family Characteristics</u>		
Living Arrangement (%)		
One-Parent	17.6	40.5
Two-Parent	63.0	59.5
Non-Family or Secondary Individual	19.4	-
Presence of Child Under 6 in the Family (%)	23.6	14.5
Median Family Income in 1999 Dollars (Thousand)	32.6	41.0
Parent's Educational Attainment		
No High School Diploma	-	42.3
High School Diploma	-	30.7
Some College	-	13.4
B.A. or Higher	-	13.6
Parent's Labor Force Participation		
Both Parents Employed		25.1
One Parent Employed		43.5
None Employed		31.4
<u>Characteristics of Place of Residence</u>		
Living in a Central City MSA (%)	46.4	45.8
Region (%)		
Northeast	11.8	9.0
Midwest	12.1	9.9
South	24.8	25.1
West	51.3	55.9
<u>Country of Origin (%)</u>		
Cambodia	13.8	8.2
Thailand	12.8	12.6
Vietnam	58.6	63.9
Laos and Myanmar	14.8	15.3

Figure 1. Average Years of Schooling for SEA Immigrants and Their Offspring

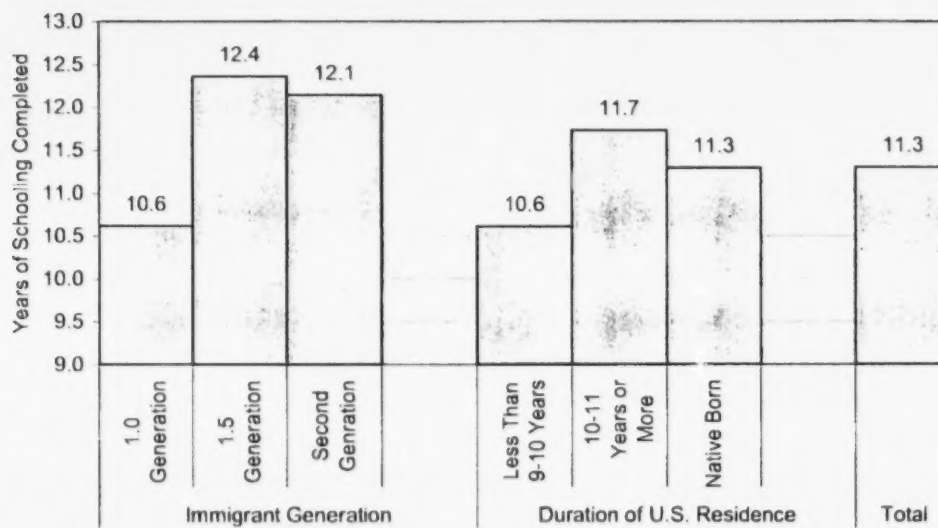


Figure 2. Average Years of Schooling for SEA Immigrant Offspring

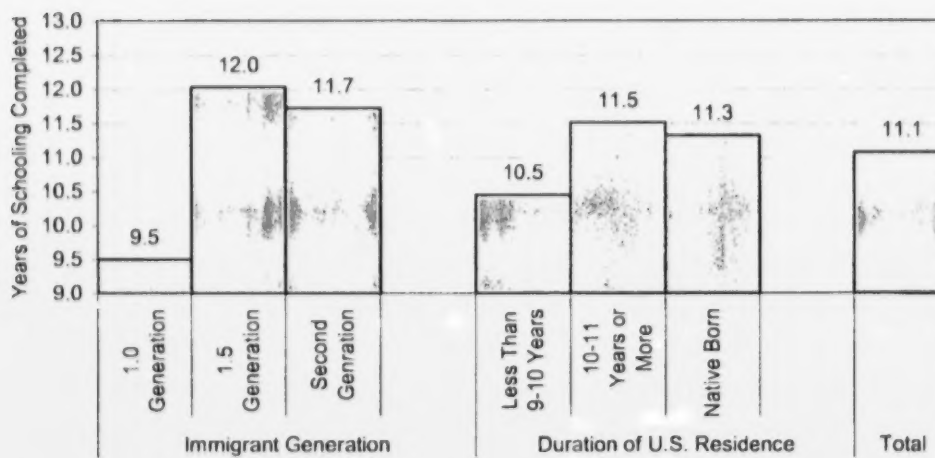


Figure 3. Percent of Employed: Pooled

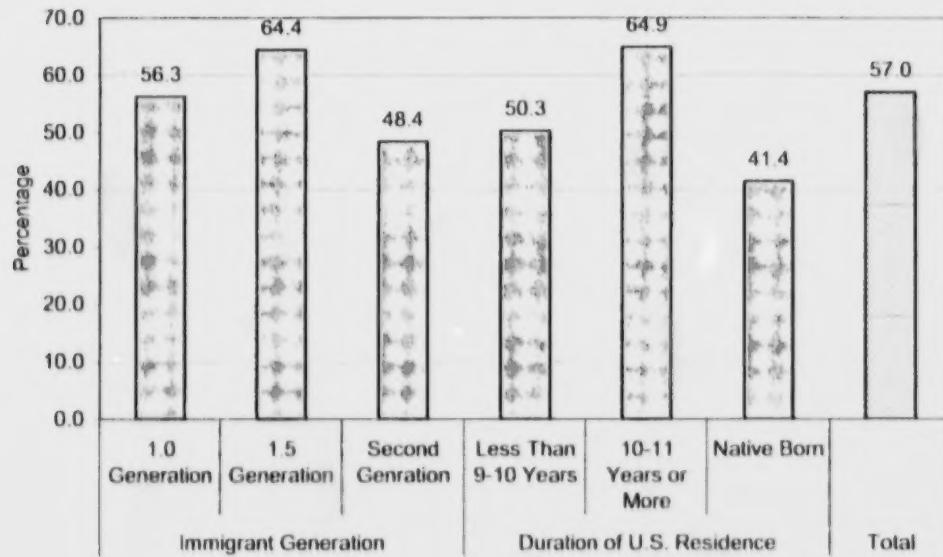
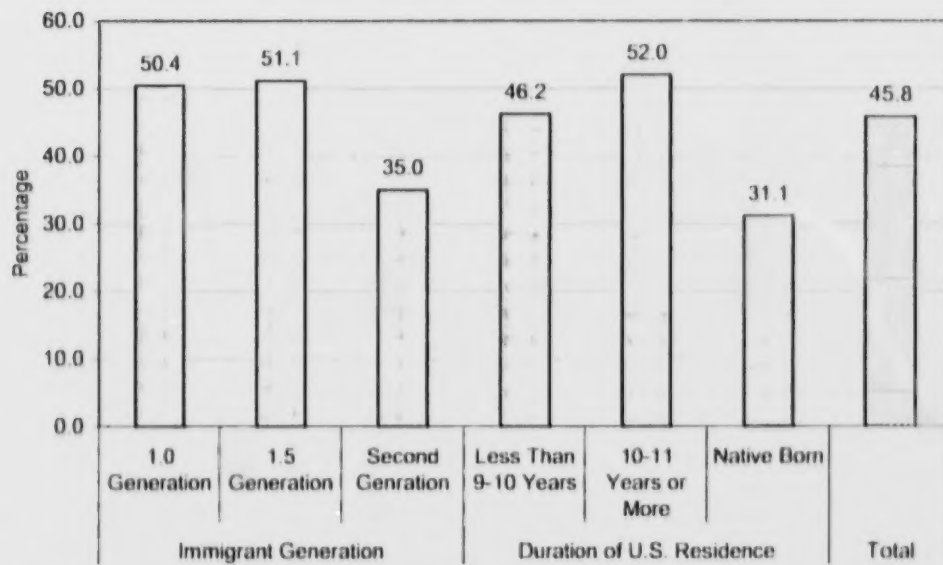


Figure 4. Percent of Employed: Immigrant Offspring



With regard to the length of U.S. residence, immigrants with longer duration of U.S. residence had better educational attainment than those with shorter duration (11.7 years versus 10.6 years, respectively). The educational attainment of immigrants' native-born children was somewhere in-between, with an average of 11.3 years of schooling. Similar patterns are observed in the immigrant offspring data (Figure 2).

Figure 3 showed that the 1.5 generation had the highest percentage of being employed (64.4 percent), compared to 56.3 percent among the 1.0 generation and 48.4 percent among the second generation. Additionally, immigrants with longer duration were likely to be employed than their counterparts (64.9 percent versus 50.3 percent, respectively). The native-born children exhibited the lowest rate of being employed (41.4 percent). Similar patterns were observed for the employment status of immigrant offspring (Figure 4). Overall, less than 50 percent of immigrant offspring was employed.

Multivariate Analysis of Educational Attainment

The results of WLS regression analysis were presented in Table 2 in 5 models. The first 3 models (Models I-III) were estimated separately for the effects of immigration, individual, and family factors. Model IV combined these sets of predictors and Model V, the full model, was estimated with the effects associated with place of residence held constant. The analysis was performed to test whether the effects of immigration factors hold, controlling for the remaining factors in the full model. Comparing the adjusted R-squared statistics among Models I-III indicates that family factors explains the variation in educational attainment of SEA immigrants better than do

Table 2. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of Educational Attainment: Pooled

Predictors	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Constant	11.67	12.66	9.58	10.31	9.54
Immigrant Generation ¹					
1.0 Generation	-1.72 ***			1.37 ***	-1.23 ***
1.5 Generation	-0.10			-0.15	-0.10
Length of U.S. Residence ²					
Less than 10 Years	0.32			0.26	0.22
10 Years or More	1.049 ***			0.61 *	0.65 **
Age		-0.03 ***		-0.02	-0.02
Square of Age Centered		-0.002 ***		-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***
Male		0.80 ***		0.79 ***	0.83 ***
Married ³		-0.21		1.04 ***	0.92 ***
School Enrollment		-0.18		0.28	0.31
Family Income (in 1999 Thousand Dollars)			0.03 ***	0.02 ***	0.02 ***
Family Structure ⁴					
One-Parent Family			0.78 ***	0.89 ***	0.55 **
Non Family or Secondary Individuals			2.18 ***	2.46 ***	2.02 ***
Presence of Children under 6 in the Family ⁵			-0.17	-0.76 ***	-0.45 **
Living in a Central City MSA ⁶					-0.50 ***
% of Cambodian Population in MSAs					0.01
% of Thai Population in MSAs					-1.18 ***
% of Vietnamese Population in MSAs					-0.10
% of Lao and Burmese Populations in MSAs					-0.37 ***
Geographical Region ⁷					
Northeast					0.24
Midwest					0.57 **
South					0.65 ***
Country of Origin ⁸					
Cambodia					0.44
Thailand					2.46 ***
Vietnam					1.27 ***
<i>Model Summary</i>					
Adj. R-Squared (df)	0.045 (4)	0.065 (5)	0.096 (4)	0.179 (13)	0.243 (24)
F	38.60 ***	45.76 ***	86.35 ***	55.09 ***	44.01 ***

Reference:

Second Generation

* p < .05

Native Born

** p < .01

Single and Others

*** p < .001

Two-Parent Family

No Presence of Children under 6 Years Old

Living outside Central City MSAs

West

Laos and Myanmar

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the individual and immigration factors; and the effects of immigrant generation and the duration of U.S. residence decreases slightly once all the variables were included in Model IV. Even so, the results in Models V show that the effects of immigrant generation and the duration remain statistically significant.

Based on the finding in Model V, the second generation tended to have higher average years of schooling than did the immigrant and 1.5 generations, controlling for the remaining variables in the model (the corresponding coefficients are -1.23 and -.10, respectively). However, the effect of being from the 1.5 generation was not statistically significant. The average years of schooling for immigrants whose duration of U.S. residence was more than 10 years were about .65 greater than those for the second generation, while the difference between the second generation and those with shorter duration was not significant. This indicates that immigrants with longer duration of U.S. residence had greater average years of schooling than did their counterparts.

All the variables representing family characteristics had significant effects on the predicted years of schooling. Family income and living in a family without children under 6 years old increased the immigrants' schooling. Unexpectedly, the effect of family structure indicated that respondents who lived in two-parent families tended to have lower years of schooling than did those from a one-parent family or secondary individuals. For instance, the coefficients for one-parent families and secondary individuals were .55 and 2.02, respectively. First, two-parent families lower mean years of school because owing to its association with marital status and education. As shown in Models II and IV in Table 2, the effect of marital status became statistically significant after controlling for family income, family structure, and presence of children under 6

years of age. Second, the sample is consisted of both parents and children. The average level of education should be lower for two-parent families than for one-parent families if one of a married couple has less education than does the other. This is probable for those coming from the countries where historically women receive lesser incentive for schooling.

The results also show that the effects of living in a central city and ethnic concentration were detrimental to immigrants' and their offspring's educational attainment. As shown in Table 2, educational attainment is negatively affected by living in central cities, increased percentages of Thai and Laotian-Burmese immigrants in Metropolitan Areas. As aforementioned, inner cities are characterized by impoverished neighborhoods, poor quality of schools, and direct exposure to the inner-city culture that devaluates work and education (Hirschman 2001). Furthermore, the concentration of Thai, Laotian, and Burmese populations may be associated with small businesses that absorbed unskilled labor and/or that provided ethnic support for SEA immigrants with a lower level of human capital. The latter was also true for lower educational attainment of those who resided in the West where the majority of SEA immigrants lived.

These findings show that the second generation of SEA immigrants is doing better than do their immigrant counterparts from the 1.0 generation or who were recent immigrants. It is noteworthy that educational level of immigrants who arrived as adults is less likely to reflect their achievement in the host country (Kao and Tienda 1995; Oropesa and Landale 1997). Adult immigrants have fewer opportunities to continue their education in the United States than do those who immigrated as youth or their native-born children. Given this awareness, the full model of educational attainment was re-

estimated using the immigrant offspring data. The results are presented in Table 3 below and some important findings are discussed below.

First, the effect of immigrant generation was no longer significant after controlling for the individual and family characteristics (Models IV and V, Table 3). Like the results from the pooled data, the effect of the duration of U.S. residence showed that longer duration tended to increase the average years of schooling among immigrant offspring. This means that variation in educational attainment among immigrant offspring was due to insufficient time for adaptation.

Second, the effects of gender and the presence of children under 6 in the family were not significant, while the effect of family structure became negative and significant. Educational attainment among immigrant offspring did not significantly differ by gender, indicating that gender disparity in education existed among parents only. Consistent with prior research, living in a one-parent family decreased the average years of schooling of immigrant offspring.

Third, the effect of parental education was highly significant, controlling for the remaining variables in the model. Having a parent, especially a father, with a high school diploma is crucial for SEA immigrants' offspring to move on beyond high school education. However, increasing parent's level of education to some college years above the high school degree hardly increases children's average years of schooling.

Table 3. Unstandardized Coefficients of Educational Attainment: Immigrant Offspring

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Constant	11.44	14.07	12.30	15.14	14.88
Immigrant Generation ¹					
1.0 Generation	-2.17 ***			-0.56	-0.56
1.5 Generation	0.32			0.61	0.64
Length of U.S. Residence ²					
Less Than 10 Years	0.04			-0.27	-0.34
10 Years or More	0.57			0.81 *	0.77 *
Age		-0.06 ***		-0.07 ***	-0.06 ***
Square of Age Centered		-0.003 ***		-0.003 ***	-0.003 ***
Male		-0.21		-0.15	-0.13
Married ³		1.13		1.35 *	1.26 *
School Enrollment		-0.37		-0.50	-0.39
Family Income (Thousand)			0.01 *	0.01 *	0.01 *
Parent's Education ⁴					
No High School Diploma			-2.06 ***	-2.41 ***	-2.20 ***
High School Diploma			-0.64	-0.99 **	-0.99 **
Some College			-0.96 *	-1.10 **	-1.03 *
Family Structure ⁵					
One-Parent Family			-0.44	-0.35	-0.39
Presence of Children under 6 in the Family ⁴			-1.40 ***	-0.66 *	-0.44
Living in a Central City MSA ⁶					-0.23
% of Cambodian Population in MSAs					-0.18
% of Thai Population in MSAs					-0.49
% of Vietnamese Population in MSAs					0.00
% of Lao and Burmese Populations in MSAs					-0.17
Geographical Region ⁷					
Northeast					-0.30
Midwest					0.03
South					0.07
Country of Origin ⁸					
Cambodia					-0.10
Thailand					0.55
Vietnam					0.36
<i>Model Summary</i>					
Adj. R-Squared (df)	0.112 (4)	0.252 (5)	0.087 (6)	0.376 (15)	0.382 (26)
F	23.52 ***	49.08 ***	12.25 ***	29.65 ***	17.95 ***

Reference:

¹ Second Generation² Native Born³ Single and Others⁴ Two-Parent Family⁵ No Presence of Children under 6 Years Old⁶ Living outside Central City MSAs⁷ West⁸ Laos and Myanmar

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Multivariate Analysis of Labor Force Participation

Table 4 presents the effects of immigration variables, individual characteristics, and family characteristics on the odds of being employed, with and without control variables included. The goodness-of-fit statistics summarized at the bottom of Table 4 indicate that individual characteristics best explain the likelihood of being employed, although each set of the predictors exhibits some significant effects. Combining these predictors results in an improvement of the goodness-of-fit statistics over those exhibited by the individual set of the predictors (Model IV).

The effect of immigrant generation became non-significant, after controlling for the effects of individual and family characteristics (Model IV), indicating the likelihood of being employed among SEA immigrants was affected by their human capital stocks and family resources. Furthermore, the effect of long duration of U.S. residence displayed a significant effect on the odds of being employed. This means that a lengthy duration increased the likelihood of being employed for SEA immigrants. Controlling for the effects of residential location resulted in insubstantial change in the effects associated with immigration, individual, and family factors (Model V). The odds of being employed for SEA immigrants with at least 10-11 years of U.S. residence was 1.61, indicating that the likelihood of being employed for this group was 61 percent more likely than for the second generation.

The results in Table 4 showed that education, school enrollment, family income, and family structure had strong effects on labor force participation. For a one-year increase in schooling, the likelihood of being employed increased by 61 percent, while being in school decreased the likelihood by about 76 percent. Males were more likely

Table 4. Odds Ratios of Labor Force Participation: Pooled

<i>Predictors</i>	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Constant	0.66	0.55	0.46	0.36	0.34
Immigrant Generation ¹					
1.0 Generation	1.22			0.76	0.76
1.5 Generation	1.54 **			1.00	1.05
Length of U.S. Residence ²					
Less than 10 Years	1.21			1.27	1.09
10 Years or More	2.22 ***			1.68 **	1.61 **
Education		1.157 ***		1.10 ***	1.10 ***
School Enrollment		0.23 ***		0.23 ***	0.24 ***
Age		1.00		0.99	1.00
Square of Age Centered		1.00 ***		1.00 ***	1.00 ***
Male		1.88 ***		1.97 ***	2.05 ***
Married ³		0.82		1.02	1.05
Family Income (in 1999 Thousand Dollars)			1.02 ***	1.02 ***	1.02 ***
Family Structure ⁴					
One-Parent Family			1.27 **	1.22	1.40 **
Non Family or Secondary Individuals			2.17 ***	1.71 **	1.94 ***
Presence of Children under 6 in the Family ⁵			1.31 ***	0.78 *	0.82
Living in a Central City MSA ⁶					0.91
% of Cambodian Population in MSAs					0.98
% of Thai Population in MSAs					0.79
% of Vietnamese Population in MSAs					1.10
% of Lao and Burmese Populations in MSAs					0.96
Geographical Region ⁷					
Northeast					1.38 *
Midwest					2.05 ***
South					2.20 ***
Country of Origin ⁸					
Cambodia					0.59 **
Thailand					0.65 *
Vietnam					0.94
<i>Model Summary</i>					
Model Chi-Square (df)	116.3 (4)	892.1 (6)	328.0 (4)	1088.1 (14)	1189.4 (25)
Cox & Snell R-Squared	0.035	0.242	0.097	0.287	0.309
Predicted Correct %	56.5	73.4	68.0	75.1	75.9

Reference:

Second Generation

* p < .05

Native Born

** p < .01

Single and Others

*** p < .001

Two-Parent Family

No Presence of Children under 6 Years Old

Living outside Central City MSAs

West

Laos and Myanmar

Table 5. Odds Ratios of Labor Force Participation: Immigrant Offspring

Predictors	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Constant	0.40	1.04	0.47	0.55	1.06
Immigrant Generation ¹					
1.0 Generation	1.96 **			1.19	1.07
1.5 Generation	1.94 **			1.31	1.29
Length of U.S. Residence ²					
Less than 10 Years	1.10			1.18	1.25
10 Years or More	1.76 *			1.47	1.55
Education		1.156 ***		1.12 **	1.13 **
School Enrollment		0.21 ***		0.20 ***	0.18 ***
Age		1.00		0.99	1.00
Square of Age Centered		1.00 ***		1.00 ***	1.00 ***
Male		0.91		0.90	0.92
Married ³		1.84		1.67	1.88
Family Income (in 1999 Thousand Dollars)			1.01 ***	1.01 *	1.00
One-Parent Family ⁴			0.50 ***	1.20	1.28
Parental Education					
No High School Diploma			1.29	1.19	1.03
High School Diploma			1.93 *	1.53	1.28
Some College			0.99	0.67	0.58
Parental Labor Force					
Both Parents Employed			1.87	2.44 **	1.76
One Parent Employed			1.29	1.13	1.10
Presence of Children under 6 in the Family ⁵			0.58 *	0.47 **	0.54 *
Living in a Central City MSA ⁶					0.76
% of Cambodian Population in MSAs					0.99
% of Thai Population in MSAs					0.74
% of Vietnamese Population in MSAs					1.21 *
% of Lao and Burmese Populations in MSAs					1.12
Geographical Region ⁷					
Northeast					0.54
Midwest					2.11 *
South					1.43
Country of Origin ⁸					
Cambodia					0.67
Thailand					0.52
Vietnam					0.43 *
<i>Model Summary</i>					
Model Chi-Square (df)	28.6 (4)	263.2 (6)	72.7 (8)	303.9 (18)	331.7 (29)
Cox & Snell R-Squared	0.037	0.291	0.091	0.328	0.351
Predicted Correct %	59.3	76.1	63.4	76.6	77.8

Reference:

Second Generation

Native Born

Single and Others

Two-Parent Family

No Presence of Children under 6 Years Old

Living outside Central City MSAs

West

Laos and Myanmar

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

than females to be employed. Consistent with the results of educational attainment described earlier, respondents from two-parent families were less likely to be employed than their counterparts from one-parent families or secondary individuals. As shown in the descriptive table, many of SEA immigrants' offspring had only one parent who was employed.

The employment model was re-estimated using the offspring data with parental education and employment status included. The results were presented in Table 5. Prior the inclusion of the variables representing the individual and family characteristics, the effects of immigrant generation and the duration were significant, with the second generation and the native-born offspring being less likely to be employed than their counterparts (Model I, Table 5). However, these effects disappeared once the effects of individual and family characteristics were held constant (Models IV and V, Table 5). Furthermore, the effects of education and school enrollment remained relatively unchanged, and the patterns of the effects were the same as those obtained from the analysis using the pooled data. Surprisingly, family income, parental education, and parental employment had no significant effects on the offspring's odds of being employed, controlling for the remaining variables in the model (Model V).

Discussions and Conclusions

Using the pooled data from the 1994-2001 Current Population Surveys, the primary objective of this study is to examine intergenerational prospects of educational attainment and labor force participation among SEA immigrants. The second generation is predicted to have better education and higher employment rates than do their counterparts from the 1.0

and 1.5 generations. The findings do not lend full support to either the straight-line assimilation theory or the second-generation decline hypothesis.

Immigrant generation does affect educational attainment. The findings based on the pooled data show that the second generation of SEA immigrants is doing not only as well as the 1.5 generation, but also better than the immigrant generation, controlling for the remaining variables in the full model. Thus, the prediction of the straight-line assimilation theory holds for educational attainment of SEA immigrants. Such a generational disparity may be accounted for by the advantage in schooling that the second generation has over their counterparts. Prolonged exposure to home country culture slows down assimilation in the host society.

However, the effect of immigrant generation on the likelihood of being employed is not statistically significant. It is possible that the scenario of the second-generation decline is at play. In contrast, the duration of U.S. residence and the individual and family characteristics have strong effects on immigrants' employment status. Having resided for more than 10-11 years, years of schooling, not enroll in school, being male, and not being from two-parent families significantly increase the odds of being employed.

Using the offspring data to controlling for other unobserved effects associated with immigrant families, the study found that the generational disparity in educational attainment is not statistically significant, controlling for the individual and family characteristics were controlled. In other words, age, marital status, parental education, and family income explain away the generational effect. This means that social capital in the family remains an important factor in predicting academic outcomes among SEA immigrants. Given that SEA immigrants have relatively low level of education, having parents, especially father, with a

high school diploma should be substantial for immigrant offspring to move beyond the high school level of education.

With regard to labor force participation, school enrollment and years of schooling appear to be strong predictors for immigrant offspring. These findings point to the roles of human capital of individuals, a finding that is consistent with the existing literature (Chiswick and Cohen 1997). Thus, increasing the level of human capital is crucial for increasing rates of labor force participation, everything else being equal. Since a significant portion of the SEA immigrant offspring are relatively young and almost one-half of them are still in school, there is some hope that in the future these children will be able to increase their human capital necessary for the successful participation in the U.S. labor market. However, parental education and employment status play little role in predicting the offspring's employment status. Although small sample may be one reason, another explanation is plausible as well. This finding suggests a disconnected intergenerational transmission of the parent's work ethic among the SEA immigrant population. Immigrants' children who grow up in American society will be participating in the labor market regardless of their parent's status. This is possibly true because a large portion of SEA immigrant parents is neither employed nor earn enough to meet the cost of living. In these circumstances, children are to assist the family economy by participating in the labor force.

The study has several limitations. Using the March CPS data, the study failed to examine the effects of ethnic community characteristics and language proficiency on educational attainment and labor force participation of SEA immigrants. Furthermore, the study did not provide include other immigrant or ethnic groups for comparative purposes.

Finally, the sample size for the immigrant offspring is small. Future research should address these shortcomings and use nationwide and up-to-date data to replicate this study.

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